

Northern Flows



Alaska's Drinking Water & Wastewater Program Newsletter
Issue 3 Spring 2000

Message from the Manager

This year promises to be as eventful as the previous year as the Drinking Water and Wastewater (DW/WW) Program continues to be a dynamic and evolving entity by adopting new rules, developing programs, and training new staff. The most important event for us in 1999 was the adoption of the "new" Drinking Water Regulations, effective October 1, 1999. Accomplishing this was no small task. Its success is the result of hard work by the DW/WW Program staff. I'd like to especially thank Sandra Woods; Janice Adair, Director of Environmental Health; and Mary Lundquist with the Attorney General's Office. Because of everyone's dedication, we were able to adopt these regulations before a critical deadline, avoiding potentially serious federal funding restrictions. We've already started the process of Phase II revisions for the Domestic Wastewater Regulations, 18 AAC 72, and this process will continue far into the new year.

During Calendar Year 2000, we will complete the adoption of **new federal regulations by reference**, which include the Consumer Confidence Report Rule, Interim Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule and Disinfectants and Disinfection by By-Products Rule. Remember, Community Water Systems were required to complete and distribute Consumer Confidence Reports to their customers by October 19, 1999. Until the State adopts regulations addressing Consumer Confidence Reports (CCR), the EPA oversees the execution of CCRs. Also, this year we plan to develop a volatile organic contaminant (VOC) waiver program. VOC waivers will become important to have in place once all the Source Water Assessments for every Public

Water System have been completed. Our Drinking Water Protection Program (DWPP) continues to be reviewed by the EPA. Additionally, DW/WW Program staff will comment to the U.S. EPA on the proposed Radon Rule, Ground Water Rule, and a "new" Arsenic maximum contaminant level (MCL). Just a note for the curious, the current Arsenic MCL is 50 ug/L (parts per billion). EPA expects to propose a new MCL between 3 and 10 ug/L. If the current MCL is lowered to 10 ug/L, **43 PWSs** in Alaska will have difficulty staying in compliance. If the MCL is lowered to 3 ug/L, over **100 PWSs** across the State will be impacted. The cost to treat this naturally occurring, high background arsenic will be significant. Please contact one of our staff to learn how to comment on these proposed rules to EPA directly.

During 1999, the DW/WW Program had notable staff turnover. Long-term staff such as Cheryl Flothe, Art Ronimus, and Al Kegler have retired, and others have left to pursue educational and/or other career endeavors. In total: 6 staff have left, and 11 new staff have joined. Please join me in welcoming them.

For Calendar Year 2000, let's continue to produce high quality drinking water for maximum public health protection. Please feel free to contact me with your concerns or suggestions about what we do, how we do it, and ways to make the process work better.

Program Manager
Drinking Water & Wastewater Program

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Certified Installer Program News

We've asked the University of Alaska (UAA), Mining and Petroleum Training Service (MAPTS), to offer two courses for us. One is for onsite wastewater system training (our Certified Installer (CI) course)- geared toward contractors - and another toward homeowners wanting to install their own onsite system. MAPTS has facilities throughout the state and offers a wide variety of training for other public and private industries. With a network in place, they will be able to offer our training in more locations and more often than we're capable.

ADEC will continue to oversee day to day operations of the CI program. The following training is being offered:

- **Kenai Peninsula**, April 18, 2000
- **Wasilla/Palmer area**
April 20, 2000
- **Anchorage**
April 25, 2000 (primarily for contractors who must commute via air travel from remote areas)
- **Fairbanks area**
April 27, 2000
- **Glenallen area**
April 29, 2000 (tentative, based on at least 10 students)

Reporting Reminder

Certified Installers and Approved Homeowners have 90 days following completion of an on-site system installation to submit "Documentation of Construction" forms. We're upgrading our tracking data base, which will allow us to keep better tabs on plan submittals and increase our capability to follow up on systems installed by Certified Installers that have not been properly documented. So, those of you who have not submitted "Documentation of Construction" forms for systems you've installed, you need to do so as soon as possible. The form is available at our website:
<http://www.state.ak.us/dec/deh/water>

Does Your PWS Need a Sanitary Survey?

A sanitary survey is an onsite review of the water source, facilities, equipment, operation, and maintenance of a public water system (PWS) to evaluate its adequacy and ability to distribute safe drinking water. Some things a sanitary survey may turn up are:

- The location of the well allows storm water to contaminate it.
- An uncalibrated turbidimeter hides filtration deficiencies.
- A hose hanging into a utility sink is a cross connection with nonpotable water.

These and many other public health concerns are commonly uncovered during the sanitary survey. Most PWS owners hire a private sanitary surveyor (inspector) or request a survey from their health corporation sanitarian. In remote areas, several water systems can cooperate to share the surveyor's travel expenses. Drinking Water Program staff are available to perform surveys of systems with high risks on a limited basis.

Class A and B PWSs need a survey every 5 years. We've included a listing of those PWSs with overdue surveys in this newsletter. Please check to see if your water system is listed. If so, please have a sanitary survey done as soon as possible.

A current list of Approved Sanitary Surveyors is available at: <http://www.state.ak.us/dec/deh/water/qualinsp.htm> or call your Drinking Water Program specialist to request a list.

Changes in R

Fortunately, it's not as bad as you think. All 245 pages are not new regulations. Whew! We tried to make the regulations more readable, so they were reformatted. We also removed the Alaska Drinking Water Procedures

If certain requirements are no longer required to have engineered plans reviewed by ADEC

manual and only kept the appropriate sections. Also, the Alaska Guidance Manual has been removed, and is now simply referenced.

Class C Engineered Plan Review

There's more good news. If certain requirements are met, Class C systems are no longer required to have engineered plans reviewed by ADEC. We now use a registration format for Class C systems. To be registered, most groundwater sources are now only required to submit inventory and source information along with a clean bacteriological and nitrate sample. Owners of systems using a surface water source, and certain systems using groundwater sources have always been required to have their system designed by a registered engineer. But now, once the water system is built, the engineer and the contractor who built the system are both required to certify that the system was built to the requirements of the regulations.

Loans

And still more good news. The regulations became law October 1, 1999, making Alaska communities eligible for EPA-funded low

<http://www>

Regulations

interest loans to build community water systems.

So What Else Is New?

- The Source Water Protection section has been expanded to

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engineered plans reviewed
EC.

explain how owners/operators of Class A systems can help assess the vulnerability of their drinking water source.

- New Class A PWSs are now required to have the managerial, technical, and financial resources to operate before ADEC can issue a certificate to operate.
- Certain systems are now required to disinfect the water if needed.
- Laboratories are required to provide faster submittal of bacteriological analyses to ADEC and water system owners/operators.
- New user fees for services provided by ADEC.

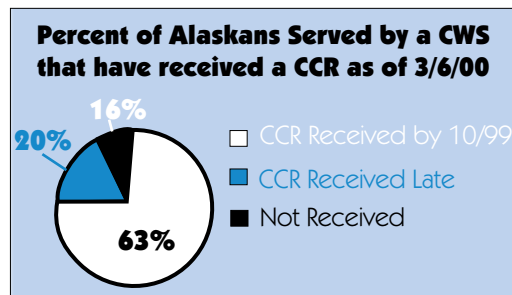
For a copy of the new regulations check out our website at: →
or call Sandi Woods (907) 465-5318. ~

For regulations, installer manuals, info about up-and-coming training, and lots of other information go to:

www.state.ak.us/dec/deh/water

Consumer Confidence Reports (CCR)

Ninety-one community water systems (CWS), serving 235,000 Alaska residents, met the October 19, 1999 deadline for delivering a Consumer Confidence Report. Overall, CWS serving 75,000 people have returned to compliance by delivering the report.



Remaining are 61,000 residents, customers of 272 water systems, who have not received the water quality report required by federal regulation. Failure to produce and deliver a Consumer Confidence Report is a violation of 40 CFR 142, Subpart O. Such violations may result in a recommendation to proceed with a formal enforcement action. Of the four states in EPA Region 10, Alaska ranks fourth in compliance with the CCR Rule.

Which PWS must prepare and deliver a Consumer Confidence Report?

If your Class A water system serves 25 or more year-round residents, or has at least 15 service connections serving year-round residents, the annual report is a federal requirement.

Who can assist you with preparing a CCR?

National Rural Water Association,
Steve Schreiber, 694-6792

Drinking Water Program,
Susan Randlett, 269-3075

Safe Drinking Water Hotline,
1-800-476-4791, EPA:
<http://www.epa.gov/safewater/ccr1.html>

Change in Plan Review Procedures

Starting May 1, 2000, all **new** Class B Public Water Systems (PWS) will be required to have a complete and signed sanitary survey submitted with the record drawings before final approval to operate will be issued. In addition, all existing Class A and B PWSs that are making modifications, and take four or fewer coliform bacteria samples a month, also need to submit a complete and signed sanitary survey with the record drawings.

The owner of a new or recently modified Class A or B PWS now has two options. **Option 1:** the owner can have the registered engineer doing the construction inspection complete the sanitary survey. Or **Option 2:** the owner can have an approved third party sanitary survey inspector complete the sanitary survey. With either option, a completed and signed sanitary survey must be received by the Department before a final operation certificate will be issued.

EPA and DEC require that all PWSs taking fewer than five total coliform samples a month have a current sanitary survey. While the engineering plan submittal and review process - which includes record drawings - covers most of the sanitary survey items, it does not document all the sanitary survey issues that the state is required by federal regulation to review. To make it easier for PWSs, we've changed our regulations to allow engineers preparing the record drawings to complete the sanitary surveys during their final inspection.

For greater detail on how this change will affect your project and how the options could work for your PWS, please contact your local ADEC office, or call Keven Kleweno at (907) 269-7696. ~

Important Information



For Water Operators and Owners

Northern Flows

DW/WW Program Directory

ANCHORAGE PROGRAM AREA

James Weise, DGS	Program Manager	269-7647
Keven Kleweno, PE	State DW Engineer	269-7696
Susan Randlett, PE	Special Projects	269-3075
Kathaleen Kastens	Special Projects	269-7639
Sue Braumiller	DW Protection	269-3076
Michael Crotteau	DW Protection	269-7514
Susan Bulkow	Program Coordinator	269-7619
Thomas Tiley	DW Compliance	269-7524
Larry Montgomery	DW Compliance	269-7594
Scotte Ramstad	Administrative Clerk	269-7653
William Rieth, PE	Env. Engineer	269-7519
Maria Ridgway	Program Analyst	269-7625
Margaret Mark	Administrative Clerk	269-7656
Lindihana Benabdelhak	Environmental Tech.	269-7517
Sherri Trask	DW Compliance	269-7618
Trena Hallback	DW Protection	269-7549
Heather Hammond	DW Protection	269-0292

FAIRBANKS PROGRAM AREA

Cindy Christian	Program Coordinator	451-2138
Lee Johnson	Env. Engineer Assoc.	451-2179
Linda Grantham	DW Compliance	451-2137
Marleyne Gesin	Administrative Clerk	451-2108
Linda Taylor	Env. Engineer Assoc.	451-5193
Fred Zonzel	Environmental Tech.	451-2109
Kevin Linebarger	Environmental Tech.	451-2169

JUNEAU PROGRAM AREA

Joe Cottingham	Program Coordinator	465-5325
Shelly Parfit	Administrative Clerk	465-5350
Kathleen Soga	DW Compliance	465-5335
Vacant	DW/WW Compliance	465-5348
David Khan, PE	Env. Engineer	465-5317
Sandra Woods	Regulations Spec.	465-5318
Sandy Smith	Environmental Tech.	465-5333

SOLDOTNA FIELD OFFICE

David Johnson, PE	State WW Engineer	262-5210 x238
David Litchfield	DW Compliance	x224
Margaret French	Administrative Clerk	x223
Scott Forgue, PE	Env. Engineer	x243

WASILLA FIELD OFFICE

Archie Giddings, PE	Env. Engineer	376-5038
Lynn Johnston	DW Compliance	376-5038
Melanie Glatt	Environmental Tech.	376-5038
Vacant	Environmental Tech.	376-5038

KETCHIKAN FIELD OFFICE

Robert Danner	DW/WW Compliance	225-6200
Marla Trimble	Environmental Tech.	225-6200

BETHEL FIELD OFFICE

Bob Carlson	DW/WW Compliance	543-3215
Agnes Chaliak	Administrative Clerk	543-3215